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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDD/ML

MEMORANDUM FOR THE STANDING GROUP

Subject: Certain Cuban Contingencies

The Problem.

To capitalize on various Cuban provocations by taking

reprisals to place pressures on, or to effect the removal of, the
CastroA. Internal Revolt

1. An internal revolt could take one of two general forms: (i) a revolt within the structure of the existing regime or (ii) a revolt essentially outside the governmental structure against which the full power of the Government might be arrayed. In addition (i) might trigger (ii) or vice versa. Either might also involve Soviet troops in countering the insurgency. Any of these cases could provide the basis for increasing US military pressures to eliminate the Castro regime.

2. Case (i) is the most likely, and also the case most likely to succeed without outside intervention. It would draw its inspiration and support from nationalistic elements who had become disenchanted by the abject dependence of the regime on the Communist Bloc, isolation within the Hemisphere, deepening of the economic crisis, a threatened or actual Communist accession to complete control of the regime at the expense of the remaining members of the 26th of July Movement, or the death of Castro.

GROUP 1

Excluded from automatic downgrading and declassification.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

IS/FPC/CDR

Date: 12/18/92

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MR Cases Only:

EO Citations

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and militia. Such a coup might start with the assassination of Castro and a plea to the US to fend off intervention by Soviet forces. Clearly, if both Army and militia arrayed themselves against the putchists, the opportunity for US intervention would be fleeting. The attitude and actions of Soviet forces vitally affect the outcome. The most favorable case for success of the coup would ensue if both elements of the Cuban armed forces supported them and the Soviets remained aloof. On the other hand, were the latter to intervene, the basis for forceful US action would be more solid.

b. Military Revolts.

Local or general revolts by the Army or militia coupled with attempts to seize the seat of Government or proclaim an alternate regime are possible quite apart from any links to a conspiracy within the regime. It is possible that an action within one of these elements might be the catalyst for similar action within the other. A militia revolt opposed by the Cuban Army and the Soviet troops would provide the least time for the US to react while the revolt was still alive. It is conceivable, however, that the revolutionists could take to the hills, prolonging resistance and giving us more time to react.

5. Popular Uprising. Case (ii), a revolt outside the governmental framework, could manifest general discontent through the appearance of a number of guerrilla bands operating at widely separated

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points and supported with food by the peasants. Alternatively, a single guerrilla leader, operating in a particularly disaffected province, might expand his operations to the point where the Government was compelled to react massively. Suffice it to say, in the atmosphere of present-day Cuba neither of these possibilities is very likely. The Government has an excellent surveillance network, both internally and with respect to the air and sea approaches to the Island, and the peasants as yet are unwilling to risk their necks until the Government's chances appear poorer than they now are.

B. Cuban Intervention in Latin America

1. A flagrant case of Cuban interference and violence in the internal life of another country (such as Venezuela or the Dominican Republic) could provide the basis for OAS sanctions, including a quarantine or perhaps a demand for inspection at Cuban ports and airfields. It would be difficult to use such an incident directly as justification for an invasion. However, in addition to the institution of a quarantine, the US could use the resulting tension as justification for a quiet buildup of the invasion force, and then use a new incident in quarantine enforcement, Cuban incursions on Guantanamo, or an uprising as justification for invasion.

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2. It might be desirable in preparation to highlight Cuban training and dispatch of subversives, instruction for sabotage, etc., as background for "the incident." The incident itself should be domestic, violent and quickly identified as part of a pattern of Castroist export of revolution which would threaten other Latin American governments. (A "one-two" series of incidents would excellently serve to underline this point.) In this manner, the need for a drastic quarantine would be established.

3. A quarantine should cover POL as well as all arms entering, and arms and "agents" leaving, Cuba; it should probably not cover food and medicine. In the long run, a POL blockade should be effective in disrupting Cuba internally. If Castro sought to negotiate an end of it, we should set an unacceptably high price such as unlimited inspection to verify no subversive training being undertaken, no arms shipments in or out (except returns to the USSR), etc.

4. An "uprising" in this situation would be similar to any other, except that the US would have been able to generate US invasion forces for its support during the blockade.

C. Incidents at Guantanamo

1. An incident at Guantanamo, such as a Cuban incursion, or cutting off of the water supply (the source of which is off the US reservation), could provide an opportunity for protective action

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beyond the perimeter of the base. In particular, restoring the source of water and protecting it from further interference would provide a reasonably good justification for the US to react with whatever degree of force was deemed necessary for this task. Assuming the Cubans resisted, the security of the element would justify broadened actions. This could come to involve pitched battles, and require US invasion.

2. Expansion and escalation from an incident at Guantanamo would be fully supported in the US and by some Allies, but it would have the political disadvantage of stemming from a US base held against the desires of the incumbent government. In general, justification based on protecting US rights would be less suitable than support to a Cuban uprising or strong action after Cuban export of revolution.

3. While the scenario of events following from an incident might escalate to full-scale US-Cuban combat, it might not. The Cubans might, at once or after some initial skirmishes, break contact and withdraw to permit the US to restore the water supply and even to keep guards outside the US military reservation. In that case, especially if the Cubans had offered to restore the water supply, it would be very disadvantageous for the US to appear to be "picking a fight" over a broad definition of our base rights.

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4. An uprising fortuitously located within range of US assistance from the Guantanamo Bay base would be militarily favorable, but it might appear to be contrived by the US.

D. Incidents at Sea

1. There are two categories of possible incidents at sea which might justify reprisal against Cuba:

a. Castroite hi-jacking of a Latin American vessel; or

b. Cuban naval attacks on or harrassment of a US or Latin American ship.

The former would not, in itself, seem to provide clear opportunity for reprisals of a direct effective nature. The latter could be met by attacking the offending Cuban vessels and perhaps counter-harrassment of Cuban ships with the possibility of an incident arising.

2. Escalation at sea might lead to US reprisal against Cuban gunboats in port as well as at sea, but unless such action led to shooting down a US plane it is difficult to see how it would justify US quarantine or invasion. If a US attacking aircraft (at sea or over a Cuban port) were attacked, we might start the scenario of reprisals against Cuba's air defense. Thus, an incident at sea could trigger the air defense scenario; otherwise, incidents at sea do not seem promising.

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